

The Italian Job

By Deborah Hedstrom-Page

Trucks, RVs, and cars cluttered the parking lot above the Columbia River. The sound of hammers echoed from the church gymnasium while the tell-tale smell of bacon lingered in the air. Calvary Baptist in The Dalles, Oregon definitely had something going on.



That something was a unique three-day building project that included people from four CB Northwest churches.

It all started with a flood in 2005 – not in the Northwest but in Italy.



The Old Mill Camp

Eight feet of water destroyed half the sleeping facilities at World Venture’s Old Mill Camp. The devastation threatened its unique ministry that gave Italians a chance to escape Naples’s fast-paced city life and hear about Jesus Christ in a

tranquil setting. To continue, the camp needed new dorms, but European inflation put a \$30,000 price tag on one trailer-type building.

By the time Doug and Dee Valenzuela, World Venture missionaries to Italy, came home on furlough, the camp had been “on hold” for two years. That’s when Don Sperry, a Calvary member and local shop teacher, heard about the problem. After crunching a few figures, he approached Doug. “We should be able to make modular units here and ship them for much cheaper.”

Designs and estimates proved Don right. One unassembled and shipped unit with a bathroom and room for twelve beds would cost \$8,500. World Venture’s “camp” fund could afford the price,





especially when additional donations came in after news of the project spread.

Phil Waldo, a volunteer publicist for the ministry in Italy, heard about the idea and reasonable cost. He contacted Don, and they organized a work party to fabricate and pack the modular buildings.


The project brought support from CB Northwest churches. Many offered to help.

Calvary Baptist provided its gymnasium, and its teens laid protective plywood on the floor. People from Grace Community in Gresham and from Hinson, First Covenant, and Montavilla Baptist in Portland volunteered to build. Others offered to cook the needed breakfasts, lunches, and dinner. Bob Miller Lumber and Supply sold them the building materials, foregoing a profit.

On a sunny, windy weekend in April almost one hundred people parked their vehicles and RV's at Calvary. Excitement ran so high that the Thursday night planners ended up starting the work. By Saturday, nine crews were using pre-cut material and construction jigs to assemble the dorms. While



many pounded and drilled, others prepared and cooked food. Phil Waldo, a former manager in construction, said, "It was miraculous how the supplies, organization, and volunteers came together without a hitch."

Working as a covenant community, the people made and packed four dorm buildings in one weekend. On May 1 the modular units were shipped from Portland. Before the month ended, they arrived at Old Mill Camp in Italy. 

What Next?

- A group from *Hardhats for Christ*, led by Byron Goodman, headed to Italy in June and helped local volunteers assemble the buildings to get them ready for ministry.
- If you or your church group would like to participate in future work projects for the camp, contact Phil Waldo at p.j.waldo@comcast.net.
- Old Mill Camp still has many replacement needs. Check out their web site at www.NaplesAlive.com.

For more information visit:

http://www.calvarythedalles.org/html/italian_job.html

A Letter from an Absent Pastor

The years 2005 and 2006 were full of challenges for Stephen Bartlow, Pastor of Joseph Baptist Church in Joseph, Oregon, and his family. Stephen was diagnosed with failing kidneys. As he was facing the need for dialysis, his wife, Carol, was diagnosed with cancer. Not only their home church, Joseph Baptist, but many other churches rallied to their support with prayers, offerings, and services rendered. I had the privilege of hearing this letter from Stephen read by Carol to the congregation of Joseph Baptist while Stephen was still recovering from transplant surgery. The encouragement and challenge it conveys is timeless and worthy of your prayerful consideration. *–Dave Cetti*

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Joseph Baptist,

Greetings in the matchless name of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray that the mighty hand of God will keep you from stumbling and bring you peace and joy in your faith.

How glad my heart is to hear of you from those who have called or written. I am richly blessed in being called to serve you. I have boasted in the Lord of you to people here of how you have shown me the love of Christ and been His hands, feet, and heart to us. I also rejoice that He has done great things among you in my absence. Remember, Christ is the head of the church! He is your sufficiency and power. He fills everything in every way. I eagerly look forward to rejoining you, Lord willing, so that we can share the testimonies of God's majestic work in our lives. I already feel I have been away too long. My soul is full with the goodness of the Lord.

Dear ones, I have walked through some dark valleys while I have been away from you. At times I thought the pain was more than I could bear. I despaired of life and have had a deep wrenching in my soul. However the Lord, in His wisdom and grace, chose to keep me in this world for a while yet and has used this experience in my life in wonderful ways that are more than I can give an account to you here. This I know, God has purposes in mind when he begins to shape His tools and sharpen them. I know you have also been through this shaping and refining process from reports I hear. So we must rejoice because God has concerned Himself with us, His creatures, and is working. To hear from God is



always pleasant, even if He uses pain to clean out our ears. I know you have rejoiced because of my survival, yet we must also rejoice because eternal dimensions of our spirit have been cleansed and broadened by what has happened. To waste what God has brought about in this time of suffering would be a greater calamity than my death, which would only place me in the presence of the blessed Lord.

So, I have two watch words to urge upon you. First, continue in all earnestness in prayer – not only for me and others who are suffering, but in thanksgiving to our God who is at work. As you prayed diligently for me in my distress, and do not forget those prayers have been answered, pray also for the lost in Joseph. Are they not in more distress than I? Is not their case more urgent? If I die, I go to the presence of the risen Christ. They would go into everlasting torment. Does this not break your heart? Pray then for broken hearts and as the disciples asked, so ask you, “Master, teach us to pray!” He is gracious and this is His will, I assure you. I also encourage you to be watching in prayer for God’s work around you. This is your invitation to follow Christ in what He is doing in your midst. I am now more convinced than ever that God is going to do a work of great glory in Joseph and Wallowa County. I don’t want us to miss our chance to be blessed in obedient service in this work. Remember to pray together. Where two or three are gathered, He is there!

My last watch word for you is this. Look out for one another as you have looked out for us. Have you noticed someone missing from our congregation? Perhaps this is God’s calling for you to reach out to that person this week and let them know they are loved and a vital part of the body there. Let the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Love and Gentleness, rule your hearts in this.

I love you and I am praying for you.

Stephen

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Join Us in Prayer

Prayer is the supreme way to be workers together with God. — Wesley L. Duewel

Jesus taught that perseverance is the essential element in prayer. - E. M. Bounds

You are invited to join our CB Northwest staff in praying for our churches. We gather every Tuesday morning, along with the World Venture staff, to pray for a dozen churches. Each Tuesday the list of churches is posted on our website, along with a Scriptural Prayer Focus that changes each month. To join us in prayer, simply go to www.cbnw.org and click on the link below "This Week's Prayer Focus."

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